

## ALDERMEN IN THEIR DEFENCE.

## Why They Voted for the Fuel Gas Ordinance Explained in Letters to the Journal.

Mayor Strong will veto the gas franchise which was given by the Board of Aldermen to the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Power Company on Tuesday. He has discussed the matter very fully with Assistant Corporation Counsel Turner, who is now looking up the authorities upon which to base an opinion. The Aldermen can, and will, it is claimed, pass it over the Mayor's veto.

Mr. Turner believes that any citizen can go into court and test the legality of the act of the Aldermen in granting the privilege, but if this cannot be done the Department of Public Works can refuse permits to open the streets. This will compel the Consumers' Company to maintain the Commissioner of Public Works, on which a review of the whole matter and a decision of the Supreme Court can be had.

A critical examination of the franchise by Mr. Turner reveals that there is nothing in it to compel the company itself to lay a foot of main. There is nothing in it to forbid a sale of the privilege, although there is a clause prohibiting consolidation. If the company can arrange to use old mains the city will be cheated out of \$3,000,000, as the company proposed to lay about 1,500 miles at 90 cents a lineal foot.

There is a strong suspicion that the Consumers' Company has in view the sale of the franchise to others, who are now in control of gas plants. There was a rumor in City Hall yesterday that one of the Aldermen was to be made superintendent of the new company, but it could not be verified.

President Jewellman, who was against the franchise, stated on Tuesday that the Aldermen based their authority for giving the franchise on Section 86 of the Consolidation Act. The validity of this section Corporation Counsel Scott said was extremely doubtful. It was suggested to Mayor Strong yesterday that any citizen might nullify the measure, which would prevent its becoming law until the courts had passed upon the writ. Colonel Strong seemed pleased and said that might solve the difficulty, but he declined to commit himself further.

Aldermen, in communications to the Editor of the Journal, explain the votes which they cast when the Board passed the measure.

## Alderman Randall.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted to grant the franchise to the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Power Company for this reason: The Northern Gas Light Company charges \$1.00 per thousand cubic feet of gas consumed, which is 35 cents more than is charged anywhere else in the city. The district I represent is larger in area than the rest of the city. There are not six paved streets in the entire territory, therefore the tearing up of the streets will not materially interfere with us. The existing gas companies tear up the streets and does not pay a cent for excavations, and the new company agrees to pay the city 30 cents per lineal foot.

Another reason is that I am opposed to combinations and trusts of all kinds.

RUFUS R. RANDALL.

## Alderman Woodward.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted to grant the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Power Company the franchise to lay pipes throughout the city because I think it will be a benefit to the people of the city. All franchises granted to gas, electric light and railroad companies are granted in perpetuity. Why should not the franchise for this company be granted in the same way? I am in favor of city ownership of gas works, and if both propositions had been presented I would have favored city control and ownership, and will vote to adopt the measure if introduced.

COLLIN H. WOODWARD.

## Alderman Tait.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I think the fuel gas franchise is beneficial to the poor people in my vicinity, where a large amount of gas is supplied between the Manhattan and Mufsal gas companies, one of which is on Eleventh street, and the other on Fourteenth street. They charge enormous prices for gas. I have to pay the average of \$25 a month, and I think I have to look at my own interest as well as that of the city. The franchise will be a good thing for the working class of people. Where we have no opportunity of putting people to work this will open employment for plumbers, steam, gas fitters and all classes of mechanics. And, furthermore, it will be beneficial to the city. It will save enormous expense in the Street Cleaning Department, which now carries away ashes and cinders from the different buildings where they burn fuel for power, which the gas company can supply.

W. TAIT.

## Alderman Hackett.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I was not present at the meeting, but had I been present I should have voted for the fuel gas franchise, because I believe that it would be a good thing for the people of this city.

JOS. T. HACKETT.

## Alderman Goodwin.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I believe it to be a benefit to the city. It would be an aid to the Street Cleaning Department, because it would do away with the ashes and dirt that accumulate from the use of coal. People who now use gas for fuel or heat are compelled to pay \$1.25 a thousand for it; under the new system they would get it for 40 cents for families and still cheaper for manufacturing purposes. It would be a benefit to the poor in this way.

While only \$15,000 is said to be offered for the franchise, no mention is made of the fact that the company is compelled to pay 30 cents per lineal foot for every foot of pipe laid. It is estimated that there are 1,500 miles of street in the city. As every one knows, there are 5,250 feet in a mile, this multiplied by 1,500 and again by 30 cents, it appears on its face that the franchise is not being given away. By this the city would get over \$3,000,000 for the franchise.

FRANK J. GOODWIN.

## Alderman Brown.

To the Editor of the Journal:

This measure in my opinion is one of the most opportune kind, and should prove of vast benefit to the poorer classes. One of the main reasons for congratulation is that it will eventually cause a big reduction in the price of gas all around. The day has gone by when a few monopolists can dictate to the big city of New York. If I have had one, I have had at least six petitions from the people of my district who are heart and soul in favor of seeing this thing go through. Not only will gas be much cheaper, but it will prove a boon as far as cleanliness is concerned. I could give a dozen other good reasons for my voting for the giving of this franchise.

N. T. BROWN.

## Alderman Goetz.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted for this measure because I think that it is a good thing for the people in general. Furthermore it is much cheaper than coal and wood and cleaner. Fully forty separate petitions were sent to me from my constituents in the ward asking me to favor the measure and use all of my influence to see that the franchise went through. All this talk of boodle is bosh, pure and simple.

CHRISTIAN GOETZ.

## Alderman Clancy.

To the Editor of the Journal:

My reason for granting this franchise was because I earnestly believe that the rate for gas as charged at present is exorbitant, and I saw in this measure a way by which the poorer class of people would benefit to a great extent. Then again, petitions from my constituents in the ward from which I come have been addressed to me in such large numbers that that alone would have caused me to favor this franchise.

In my estimation, the people at large are with us in this matter. I would say that it is the best measure that ever came before me.

WILLIAM CLANCY.

## Alderman Goodman.

To the Editor of the Journal:

My reason for voting in favor of this measure was to provide a cheap fuel gas to the people of this city as against the high prices of the Gas Trust. As far as the perpetuity of the franchise is concerned, I did not know that it is different from any other franchise of the kind that has ever been granted. All are for an indefinite period of time.

Taking the statement that appeared before the committee, the prices under the new franchise will be 75 cents to \$1.25 on Manhattan Island, and 75 cents to \$1.00 on the North Side. The companies in existence pay nothing to the city. The new company is to pay the city 30 cents per lineal foot of excavation. Taking the personnel of the company into consideration there seems to be no doubt that, if they get the franchise they will operate according to this term. Their offer is undoubtedly the best that has been made.

ELIAS GOODMAN.

## Alderman Muh.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted for the franchise for four reasons:

One reason is that the four lawyers of the Board of Aldermen were in favor of putting up the franchise at auction. That would not have benefited the city, because the companies in the combine would have purchased the franchise. The people are tired enough of the companies that are in the combine already.

Another reason is that the fuel of the new company precludes the dust of all householders complain. Think of the coal dust in an apartment of three rooms! I have experience in that respect. The new company will save time, money and expense.

I would favor the municipal ownership of gas if I were sure that it would benefit the city. But I don't doubt that, and at any rate, it could not be achieved for some time. The municipal gas would be an experiment, and I am not so confident of municipal experiments that I could abandon the hope of immediate relief which the new franchise offers.

ROBERT MUH.

## Alderman Robinson.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted for the franchise for four reasons:

First—My constituents wanted it.

Second—It saves the city enormous sums in cartage of ashes.

Third—It creates a foil against the combination of gas companies and checks monopoly.

Fourth—It saves much money for expenses of illumination and heat to the poor.

ANDREW ROBINSON.

## Alderman Campbell.

To the Editor of the Journal:

My primary reason in voting for the ordinance was to fulfill the expressed demand of a large majority of my constituents, who are complaining about the abuses of the consolidated gas companies of this city, and who seek some relief

through the establishment of a new company that will furnish fuel gas at a reasonable figure. This new company will act as a potent force in bringing the illuminating gas companies to reduce prices, and will also have a constant source of revenue to the city for the terms of the franchise they must lay a certain amount of pipe each year, and pay a certain sum for the use of the foot.

To me the whole question centers about this—is it better to the people to get heat and cooking gas at 40 cents per 1,000 cubic feet, instead of paying for illuminating gas at \$1.25 per 1,000 cubic feet.

This question, if answered affirmatively, settles the matter. I know that as far as I am concerned I have acted in compliance with the wishes of my constituents.

THOMAS M. CAMPBELL.

## Alderman Lantry.

To the Editor of the Journal:

In answer to the question of your representative as to why I voted to give a franchise to the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Supply Company, I can only say that I did so because I believe that it will be of great benefit to the city of New York. I am satisfied that \$15,000, the amount of the bonus to be paid to the city, is perfectly fair, and I agree that 30 cents per lineal foot for all pipes laid will be much better for the city than any amount that we might specify.

In my opinion the city should control all of the gas plants, and I regard the formation of this company as a step toward that end, though I do not think that the time is yet ripe for municipal control. The franchise which we have approved will do the greatest good for the greatest number, and I am satisfied that all of the members of the Board thoroughly understood the bill when they voted on it. I do not consider that the Board of Aldermen has voted to give any exclusive rights to this company, and I think that franchisees may with propriety be given to any other company if the need should arise.

FRANCIS J. LANTRY.

## Alderman Ware.

To the Editor of the Journal:

The reasons why I voted against the franchise are as follows: First—New York ought to have the cheapest and best fuel gas. We do not know that the company who got the franchise can give this. They have not demonstrated that they could.

Second—The Philadelphia gas plant was started in open meeting of the Board to be worth \$30,000,000. New York's plant is worth as much more than that as New York is worth more than Philadelphia.

Third—Three other companies wanted this franchise. Why was it not sold at auction? There is no danger of anybody bidding for it more than it is worth.

Fourth—I believe in municipal ownership of gas and railroads, as well as water. Fifth—I do not believe in granting a franchise to any corporation. Think of the abandonment of the privileges, prospects, objects of ambition of an entire city for an endless period in order that a few may be enriched.

FREDERICK A. WARE.

## Alderman Olcott.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted against the franchise because: First—I believe in the municipal ownership of gas, and that, to my mind, furnishes a sufficient reason for voting against any new gas franchise. Second—I join Mr. Justice Smith and the Corporation Counsel in grave doubts as to the power of the Board to grant such a franchise.

Third—In some respects the proposed franchise does not sufficiently protect the interests of the city.

W. M. K. OLCOTT.

## Alderman Benj. E. Hall.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I voted against the proposition because I always object to giving any company a franchise in perpetuity, and because I considered the compensation offered inadequate to the value of the franchise, which permits this company to ear up 1,500 miles of streets in this city. I have always believed that franchisees of this kind should be put up at auction by the comptroller and knocked down to the company offering the largest per cent. of its gross receipts to the city.

Alderman Andrew A. Noonan—We are condemned because we granted a franchise and exacted nearly \$1,000,000, instead of what has heretofore been done—granting the use of the streets for nothing. As the one who introduced the ordinance, I will say that, I searched well into its merits, examined into the working of gas plants and found out that the members of the company asking for the franchise were men of such position and capital as to reasonably assure us that they can and will do as they promise. If, after an explanation to the public, the granting of this franchise were to be left to popular vote, there would be an immense majority in its favor.

Alderman Jacob C. Ward—Had we sold the franchise at public auction it would have been bought in by the present trust, and the new plant would never be constructed. Think what a benefit the poor of the city are going to derive from fuel gas at from 25 to 50 cents per thousand cubic feet, and what a saving it will be to the city, in the less amount of cartage that the Street Cleaning Department will have to perform.

Alderman Charles A. Wines—Great numbers of men will be given work by the tearing up of the streets and the putting in of the new plant, for it will necessarily be a long and extensive task. I approve of Alderman Olcott's resolution to investigate the affairs of the gas companies, but that should not check us in this matter of the fuel gas. The sooner the company actually begins work, the better it will be for the interests of the entire city.

Alderman Charles A. Parker—This is a move in opposition to the Gas Trust, and is for the benefit of all the people. Municipal ownership, which I strongly favor, cannot come for years, and meanwhile we ought not to be compelled to pay exorbitant rates, and go without fuel gas altogether. The grant is not exclusive. Should there be dissatisfaction with the company, a new company may be granted equal privilege—at any time, or the city can put in its own pipes at any time it desires, and recede this company out.

Alderman Henry L. School—If every other member of the Board had voted against the ordinance I still should have voted for it, as I believe that through the agency of this new company, the people of this city, and the municipality, will be enabled to get gas at a much cheaper figure; and they will be furnished with heating gas from the start, at 40 cents per 1,000 cubic feet.

Alderman John J. O'Brien—In approving of the ordinance giving a franchise to the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Power Company, I think I have acted for the best interests of the city and people, for by the terms of the franchise the company must lay \$50,000 worth of pipes every year, and as there are 1,500 miles of streets in the city, this will bring in a large yearly revenue to the city, as the company must pay 30 cents per lineal foot for all pipes that it puts down.

## WHEAT FALLS IN PRICE.

Due Mainly to the Lack of Foreign Support and but Little Trading Done.

On "Change, Thursday, Dec. 10.

The price of wheat continued to decline today. The local market opened 1/2c to 3/4c lower on generally disappointing news from Europe. All the foreign markets sent lower prices for wheat, which was the cause of the decline.

Trade was very light, and prices sold off 1/2c to 3/4c from the opening quotations. A number of shorts covered near the middle, and the market rallied 1/2c, but the latter lack of outside support caused the gain to be lost, and the tone to turn easy.

The Government report, which was issued this afternoon, was discussed, but had no perceptible effect on prices. The market continued dull and weak until the end and closed unsettled at a net loss of 1/2c to 3/4c, with December options quoted at 85 1/2c, and May at 84 1/2c. Total futures sales were 1,500,000 bushels.

The Chicago market opened 1/2c to 3/4c higher on the advanced Liverpool cables, but soon declined, and closed off 1/2c to 3/4c. The market was quiet, and the market rallied 1/2c, but the latter lack of outside support caused the gain to be lost, and the tone to turn easy.

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The corn market was inactive and prices moved within narrow range, closing easy at unchanged prices. Cash sales were 30,000 bushels, of which 24,000 was for export.

The oat market was firm and quiet all day, closing at unchanged prices. Cash sales were 12,000 bushels, of which 7,000 were for export.

The weakness in wheat affected flour adversely, and the market was easy and lower all day.

Flour products were dull and steady at 10 points advance.

New York.

WHEAT.

Dec. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Jan. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Feb. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

March 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

April 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

May 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

June 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

July 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Aug. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Sept. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Oct. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

Nov. 10. 85 1/2. High. 86. Low. 85 1/2. Close. 85 1/2.

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## GRANGER ROADS SEE A PROFIT.

## Prospect of a Phenomenal Growth of Winter Wheat Affects Them.

## Outlook for Big Cereal Shipments Next Year Unprecedented.

## Volume of Transactions in the Stock Market Yesterday Very Light.

## STATEMENT THAT WAS MISLEADING.

President of the Long Island Railroad, While Designing to Reassure Stockholders, Caused the Stock to Fall.

Wall Street, Thursday, Dec. 10.

The prospects for a phenomenal yield of winter wheat in 1897 is indicated by the Government monthly crop report, issued today, and of the highest importance to all of the railroads running through the territory in which the winter wheat is raised.

For two years the earnings of these roads during the months of June, July, August and September have been reduced to a minimum on account of the short winter wheat crop.

The heavy investment in equipment only received the full use in the fall months, when the new crop was shipped to the market, and the dividends of the bulk of the income had to be earned in a few months. A great winter wheat crop will double the period during the year when a surplus can be earned above charges.

Further advantage next year lies in the fact that when the promised great harvest in the summer the light supplies of wheat throughout the world will be practically exhausted and the winter wheat crop will bring south of the equator which come into principal competition with our winter wheat crop will not have an export surplus.

The large yield will consequently have the unpleasant accompaniment of a low price for the wheat.

It is a noteworthy fact that the Long Island Railroad, for instance, has a large wheat crop to make and pay a 4 per cent dividend on its bonds.

The average condition of winter wheat in the United States, as reported by the Government, is 95.7 per cent, has never been so good at this season. The acreage is 5.2 per cent, according to the figures. On the basis of these figures, the yield of winter wheat next year will be 302,000,000 bushels, against 287,000,000 in 1895, and 273,485,896 in 1893.

The seed planted in 1896 was 3,840 in 1894, and 3,840 in 1895. The seed planted in 1896 was 3,840 in 1894, and 3,840 in 1895.

As over the last year, the acreage is 5.2 per cent, according to the figures. On the basis of these figures, the yield of winter wheat next year will be 302,000,000 bushels, against 287,000,000 in 1895, and 273,485,896 in 1893.

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